

## Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 /016 W  
-----241034Z 019655 /17 S  
R 240732Z JAN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2313

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FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PFOR, SCUL, IT  
SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S FINAL THOUGHTS - CULTURAL PROGRAM

REFS.: (A) ROME 0049; (B) ROME 181; (C) 76 ROME 16381

1. OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS I HAVE SUBMITTED MY FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION (REFTELS (A) AND (B)). EXCEPT FOR A WRAP-UP IF THIS WEEK'S FAREWELL ACTIVITIES THIS WILL BE MY FINAL SUBSTANTIVE MESSAGE. I ADDRESS IT TO YOU TO STRESS MY STRONG FEELINGS OVER THE NEED FOR MORE U.S.G. RESOURCES BEING DEVOTED TO OUR CULTURAL PRESENCE IN ITALY. I HAVE ADDRESSED THIS SUBJECT BEFORE (REF C) BUT I HOPE THAT THIS FINAL MESSAGE MIGHT EMPHASIZE MY CONCERN AND BE OF SOME USE IN FUTURE BUDGET DELIBERATIONS.

2. WHEN I ARRIVED IN ITALY FOUR YEARS AGO, LIKE MOST AMERICANS, I DID NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT APPRECIATION OF THE IMPORTANT ROLE THAT OUR CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS CAN PLAY IN OUR OVERALL DIPLOMATIC MISSION. TODAY I HAVE A DIFFERENT VIEW. THESE PROGRAMS ARE NECESSARY. THEY COUNT AND I BELIEVE THEY HAVE A POTENTIAL POLITICAL IMPACT. THE EXTRAORDINARY  
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SUCCESS AND FAVORABLE PUBLICITY OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE LOS ANGELES SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA MOST RECENTLY BROUGHT THIS POINT HOME AGAIN.

3. DURING MY TRAVELS TO EACH OF ITALY'S 20 REGIONS OVER THE PAST 4 YEARS, ONE MESSAGE CAME THROUGH LOUD AND CLEAR. ITALIANS WANT AN ENHANCED U.S. PRESENCE IN THEIR COUNTRY.

THEY ARE NOT REFERRING TO MORE BASES OR TOURISTS AS IMPORTANT AS THOSE ARE TO THEIR SECURITY AND ECONOMY. THEY ARE TALKING OF A PRESENCE THAT CAN ONLY BE DEFINED AS A CULTURAL PRESENCE. EVERYWHERE IN ITALY PEOPLE SAID THE SAME THING TO ME, FROM THE SCHOOLCHILDREN TO THE HARDEST-HEADED POLITICIANS: "DOES THE U.S. STILL CARE WHAT HAPPENS HERE?" OUR ABSENCE IN THIS AREA, THEY FEEL, REFLECTS U.S. INDIFFERENCE TO EVENTS IN ITALY.

4. PERHAPS THEY ARE MORE KEENLY AWARE OF THIS THAN WE WOULD EXPECT BECAUSE OF THE INTENSE ACTIVITY OF THE SOVIETS AND THEIR FRIENDS IN ITALY; THERE IS NO DOUBT WE HAVE HEAVY COMPETITION AND THAT THE COMPETITION SHARPENS THEIR PERCEPTION OF OUR ABSENCE. BUT THEY ARE ALSO KEENLY AWARE OF OUR CULTURAL ABSENCE BECAUSE OF THE LONG HISTORY OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS IN THIS AREA BETWEEN ITALY AND THE REST OF THE WORLD. THEY HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS IN ROME; FOR EXAMPLE IV EVERY MAJOR NATION MAINTAINS AN IMPRESSIVE CULTURAL INSTITUTE OR ACADEMY DEDICATED TO SCHOLARSHIP AND ART, THE FRENCH ABOVE ALL. WITH REGARD TO THE U.S., ITS FINE BUT PRIVATELY FINANCED AMERICAN ACADEMY STRUGGLES VALIANTLY TO STAY ALIVE BUT, THIS YEAR, WAS REDUCED TO RENTING OUT ITS MAJOR PROGRAM BUILDING TO THE INDIAN EMBASSY. ANOTHER EXAMPLE: IN SPITE OF THE CRITICAL CONDITIONS IN ITALY, IN SPITE OF THE EARTHQUAKES IN FRIULLI, IN SPITE OF THEIR FINANCIAL NIGHTMARE, THE ITALIANS MANAGED TO MAKE A SPLENDID CONTRIBUTION TO THE CELEBRATION OF THE U.S. BICENTENNIAL BY SENDING LA SCALA, THE BRILLIANT PALLADIO EXHIBIT, THE MEDIVI VENUS FOR THE JEFFERSON EXHIBIT IN WASHINGTON, AND MUCH MORE. WHILE IT IS DIFFICULT TO PUT A COST TAG ON THE ITALIAN CONTRIBUTION, I LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WOULD ESTIMATE IT TO HAVE COST THEM OVER \$2 MILLION, A FIGURE WHICH IS NEARLY AS MUCH AS THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S CULTURAL PROGRAM FOR ALL OF WESTERN EUROPE. THE POINT: ITALY EXPECTS CULTURAL RELATIONS TO TAKE PLACE, AND EXPECTS TO PARTICIPATE.

5. INDEED I SOMETIMES THINK OF MY OWN EARLIER CONVICTION THAT THESE MATTERS WERE BETTER LEFT TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR. I ARGUED THAT, WITH US AMERICANS, THERE IS NO NEED FOR PUBLIC PROGRAMS BECAUSE OF THE RICH SET OF PRIVATE EFFORTS. I NOW THINK THIS IS PRECISELY WRONG OVERSEAS FOR TWO REASONS. FIRST, THE PRIVATE EFFORTS ARE UNCONTROLLED, UNCOORDINATED AND OFTEN UNBALANCED. SOME ARE NOT EVEN BENEFICIAL TO THE OVERALL NATIONAL INTEREST. THERE ARE MANY PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN THE U.S. WHICH SEND STUDENTS TO ITALY, FOR EXAMPLE; BUT THERE ARE FEW WHICH ACCEPT A COMPARABLE NUMBER OF ITALIAN STUDENTS IN EXCHANGE. THE CULTURAL "EXCHANGE" OF THE GREATEST IMPACT -- COMMERCIAL FILMS -- OFTEN SEEM TO ME, IN TERMS OF THE CULTURAL PRESENCE, TO BE DESIGNED TO PROJECT AND ADVERTISE THE LEAST ATTRACTIVE ELEMENTS OF THE U.S. AND OUR CULTURE. OFFICIAL ASSISTANCE

TO CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, IF PROPERLY STRUCTURED, CAN CORRECT OR BALANCE THESE DISTORTIONS, AND WE CAN ENHANCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TRULY FIRST-CLASS EFFORTS ON THE PRIVATE SIDE. AS FOR EXAMPLE, WE MIGHT DO WITH RELATIVELY LITTLE COST FOR THE AMERICAN ACADEMY. THE SECOND REASON WHY I BELIEVE PRIVATE EFFORTS ARE NOT ENOUGH IS A SIMPLE ONE: THEY DO NOT ALWAYS REACH THE RIGHT PEOPLE. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT MANY ITALIANS (SLIGHTLY OVER 900, I AM TOLD -- A REMARKABLY SMALL NUMBER FOR A COUNTRY OF 55 MILLION) STUDY PRIVATELY IN THE U.S., BUT WITH HIGH U.S. TUITION COSTS IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT ANY BUT THE VERY RICH CAN AFFORD IT. THIS IS NOT THE WAY TO FIGHT THE MASS APPEAL OF COMMUNISM..

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FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS

6. I WOULD LIKE TO STRESS THE ROLE OF OUR OFFICIAL CULTURAL PROGRAMS IN REACHING THE RIGHT PEOPLE. TAKE THE INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM FOR EXAMPLE, WHICH SENDS HANDPICKED ITALIANS TO THE US FOR VISITS FOR THREE WEEKS OR MORE ON CAREFULLY DESIGNED PROGRAMS RELATED TO THEIR FIELD OF INTEREST. THESE PROGRAMS OPEN DOORS, ESTABLISH CONTACTS, FORGE LINKS, AND THUS DEEPEN UNDERSTANDING. IT WAS PERHAPS OUR BICENTENNIAL PROGRAMMING IN ITALY WHICH BROUGHT HOME TO ME THE ESSENTIAL INDEED INDISPENSABLE NATURE OF CULTURAL PROGRAMMING IN TERMS OF OUR TOTAL US PRESENCE. EVERYTHING WE DID MADE PEOPLE REFLECT ON THE MEANING OF THE US AND ITS TWO-HUNDRED YEAR HISTORY, EVERYTHING REACHED INDIVIDUALS WITH A PRECISE MESSAGE. OVER TIME, THESE MESSAGES, IF

REPEATED AND SUPPORTED, REMAIN WITH PEOPLE AND THESE PEOPLE AND THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WE ARE ABOUT BECOME OUR MOST PRECIOUS ASSET IN DIPLOMACY. TRUE, IN THE GOOD TIMES, IT MAY SEEM WE NEED THEM LESS AND IT IS A TEMPTING PLACE TO USE THE BUDGET AXE. BUT THESE ARE SERIOUS, INDEED CRITICAL TIMES IN ITALY AND WE MUST INCREASE OUR INVESTMENT IN THESE LASTING HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WHICH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAS THE HIGHEST POLITICAL VALUE. I COULD RECOUNT ENDLESS SPECIFICS, BUT LET ME ONLY DWELL ON THE NEWLY-APPOINTED MINISTER OF LABOR, ITALY'S FIRST WOMAN MINISTER. SHE HAD BEEN AN INTERNATIONAL VISITOR SOME YEARS BEFORE, AND MY CONVERSATION WITH HER WHEN I WENT TO PAY MY RESPECTS BROUGHT HOME THE GRATITUDE SHE FELT TO HER VISIT TO THE U.S. WHICH SHE TOLD ME HAD OPENED HER EYES TO NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR HUMAN SOCIETY. THAT EXAMPLE, I THINK, WILL SUPPORT THE PROPOSITION THAT MANY OF OUR BEST AND MOST RELIABLE FRIENDS IN ITALIAN PUBLIC LIFE ARE BETTER FRIENDS BECAUSE THEY LEARNED MORE ABOUT US THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM.

7. I DO NOT NEED TO TELL YOU THAT THE U.S. IS GOING THROUGH A DIFFICULT, INDEED DANGEROUS PERIOD WITH REGARD TO ITALY. WE CAN SAY THAT IN THIS PERIOD THE VERY RELATIONSHIP OF ITALY TO THE WESTERN WORLD IS IN QUESTION. IN THIS STRUGGLE, IT IS MY CONVICTION THAT EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS ARE AMONG OUR BEST WEAPONS. TRUE, THEIR REAL EFFECT IS IN THE MIDDLE AND LONGER RANGE; BUT THE MERE FACT THAT THEY ARE TAKING PLACE IS AN INDISPENSABLE DIMENSION IN OUR DEALINGS WITH ANY NATION ON A DAY TO DAY BASIS. IN ITALY, WE ARE TOO OFTEN ADMIRER FOR A TECHNOLOGY WHICH PRODUCES HIGH CLASS ROBOTS. WE KNOW WE ARE MORE THAN TECHNICIANS, BUT THE ITALIANS ARE NOT SO SURE. THE BEST WAY TO SHOW THEM WHAT WE ARE, IN MY JUDGMENT, IS THROUGH EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS.

8. THUS I URGE THAT THESE PROGRAMS ARE EXPANDED, NOT REDUCED. A CURTAILMENT BEYOND THE ALREADY-LOW LEVEL OF ACTIVITY WOULD HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT OF THE MOST NEGATIVE KIND ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR POLICY OBJECTIVES. A MAJOR CULTURAL PROGRAM TODAY IN ITALY IS NOT A LUXURY, IT IS A NECESSITY. ONE COULD SAY THAT THE ONLY REASON WE HAVE SURVIVED THIS LONG IN ITALY IS BECAUSE OF THE INVESTMENTS MADE YEARS AGO IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMED ATTITUDES AMONG THE PEOPLE. WE MUST NOT NEGLECT TODAY TO SOW FOR THE FUTURE THE SAME KIND OF SEEDS. VOLPE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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## Message Attributes

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